

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DMHSA Hosts Series of Workforce Development Trainings Starting this Week; 120 to Complete Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Prevention Toolkit Trainings

Hagåtña, Guam – *The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (DMHSA) received \$221,000 in SAMHSA funding through the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) for participating in the Transformation Transfer Initiative (TTI). The first two trainings under this initiative will provide opportunities for strengthening Guam's behavioral health and primary care systems. Forty (40) participants are set to attend the **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** training on March 8 – 9, 2013; a total of eighty (80) participants will undergo the **Suicide Prevention Toolkit**, of which twenty (20) will be trained as Toolkit trainers.*

In partnership with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Drs. Jeremy Vogt and Tamara DeHay are on Guam this week to facilitate the trainings on MHFA and Suicide Prevention Toolkit. WICHE liaison and TTI coordinator, Debra Kupfer, shares: "We are excited to be here as partners with the Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse on Guam to build upon the services providers' knowledge and skills." Mental Health First Aiders can expect to learn to recognize the warning signs of mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders, and how to employ a 5-step action plan to help an individual in crisis to connect with available professional, peer, social and self-help care. "In addition, by integrating the suicide prevention toolkit in the primary healthcare setup, Guam will successfully enhance this community's suicide prevention practice," added Kupfer. "Depression and suicide ideation will be identified in its early stage, where the at-risk individual will be immediately referred to prevention and intervention services."

DMHSA has received an overwhelming number of interests for both trainings. All sessions are completely filled by community-based services providers and volunteers representing non-profit organizations, namely Guma' Mami, Salvation Army, Latte Treatment Center and Sanctuary, Inc., as well as staff from government agencies, such as GPD, the Superior Court, the UOG I'Pinangon Campus Suicide Prevention Center and GCC. The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) is co-hosting two of the Suicide Prevention Toolkit Trainings in each of their northern and southern satellite clinics. "This is indeed a great start in the implementation of the Transformation Transfer Initiative," says DMHSA Acting Director Rey Vega. "It is a clear indication that our people – professionals, paraprofessionals, community members – recognize

the need to enhance our island's behavioral healthcare system, and are taking an active role in making this happen."

Other Available Trainings

Although there is limited seating for the two TTI-funded trainings being conducted this month, there are additional Mental Health First Aid (Instructor) trainings and Toolkit Trainings being planned for in the coming months, therefore providing future opportunities for more behavioral health care skills development," says DMHSA Prevention and Training Branch supervisor Barbara S.N. Benavente. "DMHSA's Prevention and Training Branch staff are certified suicide prevention skills trainers in safeTALK and ASIST which are offered every month."

For more information and to contact the Prevention and Training office, visit www.peaceguam.org or call 477-9079 through 9083.



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Master instructors for Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Prevention Toolkit Trainings are on Guam this week to certify 120 local services providers, professionals, paraprofessionals and community volunteers through DMHSA's participation in the Transformation Transfer Initiative (TTI), allowing \$221,000 in funding for improving the behavioral healthcare system on Guam. In photo: (L-R) Sister Trinie Pangelinan (participant – Sisters of Mercy), Dr. Tamara DeHay (instructor), Barbara S.N. Benavente (DMHSA

Prevention & Training Branch, local TTI coordinator), Dr. Jeremy Vogt (instructor) and Dr. Debra Kupfer (WICHE liaison, TTI coordinator)

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